

IN BRIEF

Nest of Bates' Nightjar *Caprimulgus batesi* in Zaire

by C. Carter and J. F. R. Colebrook-Robjent.

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During his long residence in Zaire, Chapin only once recorded a nest of the forest species Bates' Nightjar *Caprimulgus batesi* (*The Birds of the Belgian Congo*, Pt. 2:421, Bull. A.M.N.H. (75) 1939). He secured a female and its egg from a forest footpath at Lukolela, middle Congo River (1°07'S, 17°11'E) on 6 October 1930. It is therefore of interest to record another nest, which was found by C. C. on 8 July 1978, 56 km north of Beni (00°52'N, 29°40'E) in the Haut-Zaire province of northeast Zaire.

The nightjar was disturbed from an egg laid on ground covered with very sparse vegetation, at the edge of thick secondary forest surrounding a gravel pit. It was flushed twice and well seen, the second occasion alighting on a nearby branch. As pointed out by Chapin (p.422, quoting Bates), *C. batesi* often lays its single egg at the edge of a garden or plantation. Bates gives the measurements and descriptions of 5 West African eggs as 31.5-34.5 x 24-25 mm. It is a large and distinctive egg and can hardly be confused with any other species. Our specimen contained a large embryo and must therefore have been laid in June. It was in beautiful condition, being somewhat glossy white, heavily and distinctly blotched and smeared with sepia over cloudings of ashy-grey. Thus it is quite unlike the majority of African savannah nightjars, which lay erythristic type eggs. It measured 33.6 x 24.2 mm and thus lies within the range of the 5 eggs taken at Bitye, Cameroun, by Bates.

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